

## **Mental Health Update**

October 7, 2005

### **Futures Meetings Set**

- The care management work group of the Vermont Mental Health Futures Initiative will meet on October 21, November 18 and December 16 (meetings will be 9-11 a.m.; places to be announced). The clinical and program characteristics subgroup is being headed up by Tom Simpatico, the subgroup studying the movement of patients by Nick Emlen. Bob Pierattini will continue to lead the overall work group.
- The subacute work group, chaired by Michael Hartman, meets on October 19, 9-11 a.m., at the Cyprian Learning Center in the Waterbury State Office Complex.
- The Futures Advisory Group meets again on November 16.

### **Futures CON Discussions Continue**

Vermont Mental Health Futures Initiative and BISHCA staffs met again this week to review CON requirements and the application process for Vermont State Hospital inpatient replacement services. Futures Director Beth Tanzman will be briefing members of the inpatient work group and the Futures Advisory Group about the discussions in coming weeks.

### **Asbestos Work To Cause Inconvenience at VSH**

The construction renovation and repair project at Vermont State Hospital has identified minor amounts of asbestos in a ceiling in the B1 unit. As a result, certified asbestos abatement workers will come in to address safety concerns with special work practices designed to manage and control asbestos risks and dust control. The dining room will be closed for a period estimated to be several days. Patients will take meals in a day room until the hazard is removed. Buildings and General Services and the hospital administration have consulted with an asbestos safety expert at the Vermont Department of Health to be sure that proper safety precautions are taken.

### **Substance Abuse Conference, October 27-28**

The Vermont Substance Abuse Conference will be held on October 27 and 28 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. Keynote speaker is Charles G. Curie, administrator of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Participation is encouraged by all Vermonters interested in substance abuse prevention, intervention, enforcement, treatment, continuing care and recovery. More information is available at [www.state.vt.us/adap](http://www.state.vt.us/adap).

### **Wrong Language Approved**

An incorrect version of a proposed Fletcher Allen Health Care contract amendment was presented to the Vermont State Hospital Governing Body at its recent meeting. The intended version, as published in the August 6 Update, does not include the words “experimental” or “investigational.”

Here is the correct version of the proposed language, as it appeared in the August 6 Update (this is substitute language for the current contract section titled “Experimental/Investigative Care”):

### ***Academic Involvement***

*As an academic institution, Contractor is expected to provide ongoing educational support and inservice training for psychiatric staff at the facility, providing academic exposure to the latest research and clinical developments.*

*Any research proposal developed by Contractor that involves VSH patients must be consistent with the State’s goals of providing safe and appropriate care that is community-based, non-coercive and consumer-driven. Any research proposal must be approved by the Contractor’s Institutional Review Board, the Agency of Human Services Institutional Review Board, and the Commissioner of Health.*

*The parties will not approve any research involving direct treatment of VSH patients unless and until, after consultation with appropriate stakeholders, including the VSH Governing Body and the State Adult Mental Health Program Standing Committee, comprehensive policies and procedures are in place governing the review, oversight and monitoring of such studies, including policies pertaining specifically to informed consent in involuntary settings.*

This language will be presented to the Governing Body at its October 19 meeting. In the meantime, both parties to the contract have agreed that no research will be authorized by the current language in the section of the contract titled "Experimental/Investigative Care."

### **Futures and Global Commitment**

Close watchers of the testimony at last Friday’s Joint Fiscal Legislative Committee hearing on Global Commitment noticed that \$10.8 million was included in the plan’s cap (or upper limit) for “VSH alternative services.” This includes both Vermont State Hospital alternative inpatient services and alternative community services. In addition to the \$10.8 million for alternative services, however, the amount of \$7.8 million, which represents the Vermont State Hospital’s gross Medicaid receipts for SFY 04, also was included in the cap, for a total of \$18.6 million.

### **VSH Census**

The Vermont State Hospital census was 44 as of midnight Thursday night. The average census for the past 45 days was slightly more than 48.

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